

Notice of Allowability

Application No.

09/474,043

Examiner

William P. Watkins III

Applicant(s)

THOMAS ET AL.

Art Unit

1772

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address--

All claims being allowable, PROSECUTION ON THE MERITS IS (OR REMAINS) CLOSED in this application. If not included herewith (or previously mailed), a Notice of Allowance (PTOL-85) or other appropriate communication will be mailed in due course. **THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWABILITY IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS.** This application is subject to withdrawal from issue at the initiative of the Office or upon petition by the applicant. See 37 CFR 1.313 and MPEP 1308.

1. ☒ This communication is responsive to amendment filed 26 July 2004.
2. ☒ The allowed claim(s) is/are 33,35-42 and 46-64.
3. ☒ The drawings filed on 24 May 2000 are accepted by the Examiner.
4. ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 - a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some* c) ☐ None of the:
 1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* Certified copies not received: _____.

Applicant has THREE MONTHS FROM THE "MAILING DATE" of this communication to file a reply complying with the requirements noted below. Failure to timely comply will result in ABANDONMENT of this application.
THIS THREE-MONTH PERIOD IS NOT EXTENDABLE.

5. ☐ A SUBSTITUTE OATH OR DECLARATION must be submitted. Note the attached EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT or NOTICE OF INFORMAL PATENT APPLICATION (PTO-152) which gives reason(s) why the oath or declaration is deficient.
6. ☐ CORRECTED DRAWINGS (as "replacement sheets") must be submitted.
 - (a) ☐ including changes required by the Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) attached
 - 1) ☐ hereto or 2) ☐ to Paper No./Mail Date _____.
 - (b) ☐ including changes required by the attached Examiner's Amendment / Comment or in the Office action of Paper No./Mail Date _____.

Identifying indicia such as the application number (see 37 CFR 1.84(c)) should be written on the drawings in the front (not the back) of each sheet. Replacement sheet(s) should be labeled as such in the header according to 37 CFR 1.121(d).
7. ☐ DEPOSIT OF and/or INFORMATION about the deposit of BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL must be submitted. Note the attached Examiner's comment regarding REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEPOSIT OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL.

Attachment(s)

1. ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2. ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3. ☐ Information Disclosure Statements (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08), Paper No./Mail Date _____
4. ☐ Examiner's Comment Regarding Requirement for Deposit of Biological Material
5. ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6. ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413), Paper No./Mail Date _____
7. ☒ Examiner's Amendment/Comment
8. ☒ Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance
9. ☐ Other _____

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1. An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

On page 6 of the specification, in line 12, after "1998," the phrase --now U.S. Patent 6,200,669-- has been inserted.

The amendment, as a formal matter, updates the status of an application given in the specification.

2. The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance: the limitation of a filament material having cells in combination with the other limitations of claims 33, 61, 62, 63 and 64 distinguish over the rejections of record. Newly cited Rudner teaches a fiber with a foam coating but does not teach a filament material with an elongation at break of from 300% to 600% as required by claims 33, 61-64. Newly cited Lauer et al. and Halberstadt et al. teach elongated foam articles, but do not teach a filament material with an elongation at break of from 300% to 600%. The limitation of an elastic foam layer with cells formed by an opening agent that is stretched before joining to a spun-bonded layer in combination with the other

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limitations of claims 57 and 58 distinguish over the rejections of record, which do not teach the stretching of the foam layer before bonding to the second layer. Newly cited Zlatkus teaches an elastic foam layer, but there is no stretching before bonding. Shawver et al. '976 also do not teach stretching of the foam layer before bonding. Mormon et al. '497 teaches stretching of a foam layer before lamination, but the stretching is to form porosity by interaction with a fill material. The instant claimed cell opening agent forms porosity by reaction of the agent and release of gas. Thus Mormon et al. provides no motivation to stretch a foam material with a cell opening agent.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

3. A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the

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finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on 26 July 2004 has been entered. An action on the merits is given above.

4. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to William P. Watkins III whose telephone number is 571-272-1503. The examiner works an increased flex time schedule, but can normally be reached Monday through Friday, 11:30 A.M. through 8:00 P.M. Eastern Time. The examiner returns all calls within one business day unless an extended absence is noted on his voice mail greeting.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Harold Pyon can be reached on 571-272-1498. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

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WW/ww

October 17, 2004

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "William P. Watkins III". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized "W" and "I" at the end.

**WILLIAM P. WATKINS III
PRIMARY EXAMINER**